

"Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman" "and members of the committee."

My name is Cara Cappalli, and I am a resident of Meriden CT. I am here to testify in support of **SB 292 - An Act Concerning Behavior Analysts.**

I have been Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2004 and currently serve as the Coordinator of Autism Programs for Area Cooperative Educational Services. As an agency, we serve the educational needs of students from more than 25 school districts in the state. Currently, our Applied Behavior Analysis division services 74 students aged 3-21 across our 2 Autism programs. Within these programs, I supervise the work of 8 additional Board Certified Behavior Analysts. These behavior analysts work as part of an interdisciplinary leadership model, and are responsible for maintaining the science of the instruction that these students receive on a daily basis. We create programs for reduction of problem behaviors in addition to the acquisition of new and functional skills across all domains. We train other professionals and support staff to carry out these programs, collect and analyze data and make decisions which impact the future direction of these programs. It is imperative that the Behavior Analysts informing the progress of these programs have the correct education, training and continuing education to ensure student success. The scope of our practice is intensive, and cannot be accomplished by individuals not properly trained in the science of behavior analysis.

While there are currently 548 certified behavior analysts in the state of Connecticut, we continue to see far too many individuals working in school districts and homes, labeling themselves behaviorists, or their work Behavior Analytic. If the work is not done well, it is the clients who suffer, not reaching what could be their best potential, wasting the time that we know to be so valuable. Through our Board Certification and recent changes requiring this credential, we have made great gains in this area, but the climate of service provision is ever changing. 24 states, including those surrounding us (NY, MA, and RI) have moved to include licensure of Behavior Analysts, expanding access to behavior analytic services for clients. By moving forward with this bill as written, we are looking to further protect our consumers, generally a very vulnerable population including those with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, intellectual disability, other developmental disabilities, as well as the families of these individuals who are seeking the best possible treatment and outcome for their loved ones. Through state licensure, these consumers, the families, school districts, DDS, and insurance providers, will have a greater means of regulating the practice of applied behavior analysis, and identifying qualified providers. Thank you for your time and consideration.